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Letter dated 10 December 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the pleasure to transmit the statement of His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, delivered on the occasion of International Human Rights Day (see annex).

I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 70, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Tawfeeq Ahmed **Almansoor**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 10 December 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

Message of His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salaman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, on the occasion of International Human Rights Day

On the eve of 10 December, the world stands ready to observe Human Rights Day on the threshold of a significant stage of human history. The wave of conflicts that the world continues to undergo, from East to West, have cast a shadow over general peace and security and had a negative impact on development processes that might bring prosperity to the inhabitants of the world. This in turn has led to a deterioration in the global human rights situation. Urgent efforts were needed to disseminate and strengthen a culture of human rights.

On the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights we renew our support for the principles on which that Declaration is based and which, taken together, affirm recognition of the dignity of all human beings and the equality and inalienability of their rights as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

We call on the international community to use this opportunity to launch an initiative to generate momentum to make human rights awareness an integral feature of the behaviour and practices of peoples in order to restore dignity to humankind and translate the principle of the universality of human rights into reality on the ground.

It gives us great pride, as we take part along with the rest of the world in this great celebration, that it comes at a time when the Kingdom of Bahrain has announced the formation of a national human rights body to enhance the Kingdom's achievements in this area. This body will be responsible for dealing with human rights issues, devising human rights policy, and dealing with regional, international and non-governmental organizations. It illustrates the importance that the Kingdom attaches to protecting the gains it has realized in respect for human rights, its commitment to international agreements, and its determination to fulfil its obligations and undertakings to foster and protect human rights in accordance with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

In keeping with its commitment to human rights Bahrain has acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture, and, recently, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

As we observe International Human Rights Day, the great principles and lofty ideals contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, above all recognition of the fundamental dignity of all members of the human family and the equality and inalienability of their rights, should be foremost among our priorities and the starting point for our activities. For the past six decades it has contributed to

protecting individual rights and freedoms and making clear the essential unity of the human race.

As a international humanitarian document and a beacon of hope to a world suffering as it does from bloody conflicts and wars, the Universal Declaration represents a notable and noble sign for future generations that a human being in any time or place has the right to enjoy equality, freedom, justice and that his worth, dignity and rights should not be diminished.

Human rights is an inclusive concept that embraces initiatives and goals that the international family continues to try to implement on the ground, and we ought to treat it as such. Our efforts should not be limited merely to ensuring against violation of rights and deprivation of freedoms. We should also work to strengthen human rights in various areas in accordance with a balanced vision that makes room for development, security and freedom as interconnected concepts that go hand in hand in clear harmony and close integration.

We are concerned by the massacres, violations and crimes of genocide that continue to occur in many countries and regions of the world against individuals and groups simply because they are of a different ethnicity, religion, colour or race, and the corresponding increase in the problems of poverty, disease and famine. All this demonstrates that humankind still has a long hard road ahead of it towards establishing human rights principles on both the theoretical and practical levels.

We salute the tireless efforts made by the United Nations and its Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to develop its capacity to protect human rights and preserve peace. At the same time, we stress that nations and peoples share responsibility for economic and social development and that they must confront together the dangers of poverty, racism and terrorism through a more effective programme of promoting tolerance and human brotherhood without discrimination in a way that does not deny societies the right to preserve their own unique cultural heritages, religious beliefs and moral values.

The Kingdom of Bahrain's commitment to human rights remains steadfast and firm. Numerous civil society organizations have emerged that are working in this area, which reflects our people's awareness. Bahrain has also officially acceded to many international agreements to support human rights protection and to add to the great progress it has already achieved in empowering its people economically, politically and socially.

Bahrain has had free and fair parliamentary and municipal elections, and Bahraini women have gained the right to vote and serve in the legislature as part of their widening political participation. These significant steps are in keeping with our conviction that human rights are the cornerstone of the State based on the rule of law ruled by our country's sovereign, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, God preserve him. They have gained the trust and appreciation of the entire world, made Bahrain a leader, and reinforced the values of national unity. This trust has earned Bahrain membership in the Human Rights Council of the United Nations.

On a parallel track, the crown jewel of our development strategy is a social vision that aims to improve the lives and standard of living of Bahrainis as a key dimension of human rights, as well as ensuring that citizens have access to work opportunities and basic health, education and housing services of the highest quality.

Our efforts are ongoing to ensure implementation of the rule of law, development, separation of powers and increased popular participation. Our goal is to support and expand human rights as part of an on overall approach of keeping up with global developments in human rights. In recent years Bahrain has become party to numerous treaties and agreements in this area.

The people of Bahrain, men and women, whatever their origins, religions or beliefs, are equal participants in the performance of duties and enjoyment of rights in accordance with the principle of the rule of law for all without discrimination on any basis and the application of the principles of justice in accordance with clear and sound foundations.

Finally, the defence of human rights remains the responsibility of us all as States, organizations and peoples in order to build a world that fulfils the promises and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for all members of the human family, which includes ensuring dignity, equal rights and a better life. The goal of every civilized human society is the protection of the natural rights of humankind.